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Officials Hold First Ever National Fusion Center Conference

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, & the Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment, co-sponsored the first annual National Fusion Center Conference this past week in Destin, Florida. The conference, attended by over 580 Federal, State, and local law enforcement and homeland security officials from across the Nation, was held as part of efforts to establish the Information Sharing Environment (ISE) as called for in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. It provided the opportunity for attendees to discuss how best to incorporate State and major urban area fusion centers into national efforts to improve the sharing of information related to terrorism.

“We are working towards an era of increasing collaboration, and fusion centers are a great example of how partnerships can achieve great success,” said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff during his keynote address.

Lieutenant General Ronald L. Burgess, Jr., Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Requirements, cited one of Director McConnell's charges as he works to reform American Intelligence. One of those charges is to further information sharing in the community.

“Through the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment and the DNI’s commitment to securely share what we know, the ODNI will make our different intelligence agencies and officers stronger, more collaborative, and better focused on the needs of their customers,” said LTG Burgess.

Following the attacks of 9/11, a number of States and localities across the Nation established information fusion centers to coordinate the gathering, analysis, and sharing of homeland security, terrorism, and law enforcement information. To date, fusion centers have been established in 42 States. President George W. Bush has directed these States and major urban area fusion centers be incorporated into the Information Sharing Environment, and in doing so, they strengthen the Nation’s ability to gather and share the information and intelligence needed to protect our local communities from future attacks.

“This national, integrated network of fusion centers will be a critical part of the information sharing capability needed to protect our communities, our people and our infrastructure from terrorism,” said Ambassador Thomas E. McNamara, Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment. He called for building a “trusted partnership” for information sharing among Federal, State, local, tribal governments and the private sector saying that “a sustained Federal partnership with State and major urban area fusion centers is a national priority.”

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